

Product Safety Tips - Household Fire Extinguishers

In addition to working smoke alarms, every household should have UL Listed fire extinguishers strategically placed and readily accessible in certain rooms including the kitchen, garage or workshop.

Read the instruction manual and know your extinguisher's capabilities and how to operate it before trying to fight a fire. Portable fire extinguishers are useful for putting out small fires, but recognize your limits and the limits of the extinguisher. Even small fires can grow faster than most people realize. Too often valuable time is lost attempting to use a fire extinguisher. Play it safe: exit the area, get everyone out of the house and call the fire department immediately.

Using the wrong type of extinguisher on a fire can actually make it spread, so it is important to plan ahead when purchasing and using fire extinguishers.

Four types of household extinguishers

The manufacturer's use and care booklet provides guidance on the type and size of fire with which your extinguisher may be used. The booklet also provides tips on how to properly use and maintain your extinguisher.

Extinguisher rating	Intended use
Type A	For use on fires involving combustible materials such as wood, cloth and paper.
Type B	For use on flammable liquid fires, including kitchen grease. Never use water on this type of fire.
Type C	For use in fires involving energized electrical equipment.
Type ABC	Works on all three types of fires listed above.

Important safety instructions

- If a fire breaks out, your first step is to get everyone out of the house and call the fire department. If the fire is not spreading and is confined to a small area, use the appropriate type of extinguisher for the fire. Know your limits and the limits of the extinguisher.
- Periodically inspect your extinguishers to determine if they need to be recharged or replaced. Extinguishers need to be recharged or replaced after each use even if you have not used all the extinguishing agent.
- When using a portable extinguisher, keep your back to an unobstructed exit that is free from fire.
- Check the manufacturer's instructions for operating guidelines, including proper distance between the extinguisher and the fire. Always aim at the base of the fire.